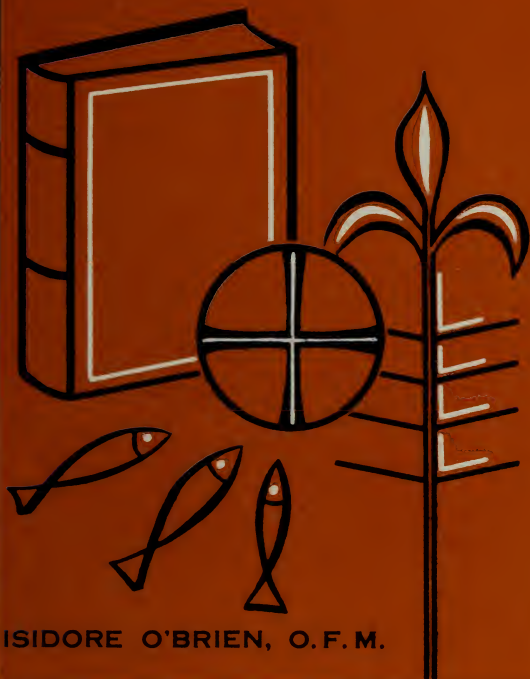


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SAINT *Anthony*  
OF PADUA



ISIDORE O'BRIEN, O.F.M.

SAINT ANTHONY'S GUILD  
PATERSON, NEW JERSEY



# SAINT ANTHONY OF PADUA

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Paterson, N. J.



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*"... Across the dark waters a beam  
of help and hope flashes as he holds  
the Christ-Child on high."*

# The Gift of Saint Francis

**S**AINTE ANTHONY has been bestowing gifts on mankind for centuries; but he himself is a gift to man. He is a creature of God and a follower of Saint Francis; formed and endowed by the Almighty, molded and vivified by the spirit of the Poor Man of Assisi.

Saint Francis has many titles to man's love and gratitude, but among the greatest is surely this, that he gave us Saint Anthony of Padua. Saint Anthony is the greatest son of a great father; the first interpreter of a love whose flame reached to and lighted up every living creature.

Father and son are apt terms here, since we intend to look at the helping influence Saint Anthony has been to mankind. In this respect the son is better known than the father; though better known only because the father laid the foundation, sowed the seed, executed the primary toil, and then left the

edifice to be finished, the crop to be gathered by the son.

I am not implying that Saint Francis is unknown, nor that Saint Anthony would not have been a saint if Francis had never lived; but the virtues of Saint Anthony for which the world loves him are the very virtues to which Saint Francis gave a new impetus and vitality for Saint Anthony's imitation — humility, simplicity and a great, broad, overflowing love for mankind. Saint Anthony easily could have been an intellectual saint, a hermit saint, a martyr saint; but without Saint Francis he could not have been a Franciscan Saint, with all the deep tenderness and simplicity that that term implies.

Unexpectedly, in the thirteenth century Saint Francis reawakened something forgotten by men. It was an idealism that lifted their minds from the contemplation of greed, gain and worldly pleasure to place them again at the feet of Christ, as He sat in the sunshine teaching the sermon on the mount. When the world was at war, the pale face of Francis beamed on all with a smile that told of great peace of heart. When gold was an alluring temptation, his tattered figure rose up before men and reminded them that the

poor owned the kingdom of heaven. As Pride rode past, it looked down on his bowed head and recalled that the meek were the possessors of the earth. Passion stopped in its impetuous stride after hectic pleasure and read in his soul the message that the pure of heart would see God.

A world that was rich needed Saint Francis' gift of poverty. A world that was self-sufficient needed his gift of diffidence. A world that was pleasure-mad needed his anti-toxin of penance. A world of purple needed the gift of rags. Saint Francis gave it an army of beggarmen: not beggarmen of necessity, for these are not always poor in spirit, but beggarmen of a strange choice: men who gave up earth to possess heaven; who elected to be forgotten in this world so that they might be remembered in the next.

Foremost of these was Saint Anthony of Padua. Born to riches and a noble name, he forsook all to become a priest. A doctor amongst the learned men of Coimbra, he put on the brown robe of Saint Francis, set out for Morocco and expected martyrdom. Cultured and schooled in the knowledge of his time, he allowed himself to be mistaken for a lay brother in a General Chapter at Assisi. He made a year's unremitting meditation in

a cave. He fasted beyond all physical endurance. He was obedient in detail, radiant in purity, tender in sympathy toward all. He was, in brief, the foremost son of Saint Francis, the most glorious follower of the Poverello: which means that he was a saint; a gift from God to man to be man's great intercessor before God; a figure sculptured in the workshop of Francis; a new creation by the greatest artist of the Umbrian hills; a being vibrant with the warmth of tenderness and sympathy, alive with a perpetual freshness that shall have lost none of its transparent depths when the oils of the greatest masters shall have dried at last and forever.

Unless we look at Saint Anthony in the light of a gift from God to man, to be man's helper, we are missing the main reason of his greatness. Unless we see that this intercessor was taught by Saint Francis to appreciate man, his sorrows and needs, we are missing one of the most charming subtleties of God's divining love for us. For it was in the divine plan that Saint Anthony should learn of God's greatness from the doctors of the schools, and should learn of man's greatness from Saint Francis of Assisi. Saint Francis realized the worth of the creature



with a grasp not surpassed by any child of Adam. This, in fact, is the very post on which his immortal fame has hinged—he loved God to a point of self-extinction, and loved man to that extremity we call folly. It was this love that influenced Saint Anthony; changed him from a saint of books and seclusion into the saint of the human race, the helper, the intercessor, the wonder-worker of the ages.

Since Adam was in Paradise, man has been seeking assistance. Always his sincerest words are those he uses when he asks for something. Saint Francis started on the high road to fame and the short-cut to men's appreciation on the very day that he commenced to give them things for nothing. The steepest but the surest road to greatness is by the stairway of self-sacrifice, building that stairway out of self-renunciation and unselfishness as we climb. If you strew gifts on your path, you will have many admirers; and withal you will have done a great work for God and humanity if these gifts you scatter lead men up to the gates of heaven.

God led the Israelites to the Promised Land by this method. Every morning brought its manna. Christ drew men to Himself

in the same manner. Every town and city had its cures and miracles. He multiplied loaves and fishes that the hungry might eat. Of course, it is only the truly great that have the heart, the time, the thoughtfulness to attend to this detail. The less intelligence we have, the more general are our observations; the less charity we have, the less individual is our kindness. Christ was God, so His wisdom and charity were infinite. The nearer the saints have imitated Him, the more have they come to help man in minute matters. "Love thy neighbor as thyself, this do and thou shalt live." That is, think for him, pray for him, beg for him if need be, this do, and both of you shall live.

This is the Gospel we must understand if we are to reach happiness. It is the Gospel that Saint Anthony understood so well, knew by heart, made the basis of all his sermons and all his thoughts, and preached so sweetly and so convincingly to others.

By thus doing Saint Anthony has lived, not only in the sense of gaining heaven, but in the sense of abiding on earth for all these centuries in the hearts of men. His claim is that he helped people. He found good in even the most degraded beings and felt that a hidden spark might become a pure

flame, as nothing is impossible to divine grace. He inspired unbelievers to abandon their errors, enemies to become reconciled, wrongs to be righted and virtue to be revived.

The world has been going to him long for the sympathy, the help and love which it craves and cannot find by itself, and as the cry arises from earth, there comes the answer from heaven. For seven hundred years, as tears have been shed upon earth, there has issued from heaven a ray of sympathetic sunshine. Heaven beholds the human heart break itself against the bars of earth, in an effort to save loved ones; then heaven descends to gather together the shattered parts, and remold them into a fresh life.

There is a statue which stands in practically every Catholic church of the world. It is Saint Anthony, and he holds the divine Child in his arms. He stands before us at every turn, and his dress is the humble habit of Saint Francis: the robe of that saint who taught men the art of being happy by forgetting themselves; of being rich by giving all they had away; of living forever by dying daily; of touching the hearts of all by helping all — an art which many have learned but of which Saint Anthony of Padua is the greatest master.

## The Friend of Man

**T**HERE is a saint who has been man's unfailing friend for more than seven hundred years. With gentleness, with encouragement, with understanding in his youthful face, Saint Anthony of Padua has helped mankind throughout the centuries. Throughout the centuries he has proved himself to be a friend so often that proof is no longer asked; has proved himself to be that which man has so often sought, yet almost the same number of times has been disappointed of finding among his fellow-men; has proved himself to be that which is so often glorified in words but is so seldom realized.

What is man's plight and position that he needs a friend so badly? Saint Augustine says that our heart was made for God and that it cannot rest until it rests in Him. He means, of course, that we cannot be at peace, be content, be filled with happiness until we rest in God. How well Saint Augustine knew the thousand wild adventures, the thou-

sand weary attempts, the thousand flutterings the heart of man would make to discover rest within some other human heart before it would fly to God and settle in His embrace, content at last.

Naturally it is because of man's mistakes that he needs a helper. Very often his mistakes are such blunders that he either does not care to reveal them to his fellow-men or, more frequently, hesitates to mention them because his fellow-men would be unable to help him in his difficulty. We can draw on our neighbor's help until the point is reached where his patience, his power and his understanding break beneath the load of misery we place upon him. Few people have more than one real friend in a lifetime; therefore, man has to rely on himself and mere acquaintances generally for those things which money cannot procure — and money can procure so very few of those things which a noble heart really craves. It is in the full realization of these truths than man addresses his prayers to heaven: it is often mere folly to address them to earth. The fact that man and women turn to heaven for practical help is the most convincing demonstration of that love and faith, called religion, which we have in the whole reper-

toire of arguments for a spiritual world and an actual hereafter. Man would have stopped praying long ago if prayer had brought no results.

And if Saint Anthony had never worked a single other miracle, the very fact that he has brought millions and millions to his feet in prayer is in itself a miracle — the miracle of preserving, in broken hearts, love and faith and hope. Yet this miracle, certainly the greatest to Saint Anthony's credit, is seldom noticed; perhaps this is because we are too childish, in too great a hurry. Perhaps it is because we snatch at the fruit and notice not the golden sun, the glistening shower, the dawn and sunset, and the whole conspiracy of elements that worked to hang that globe of fruit before us. In fact, Saint Anthony has helped us to remain children in this respect, so ready has he been to give our prayers direct answer, to hand us the immediate thing we urge and beg.

For this saint never tires. We never ask too much. He looks on us in love and pity and tenderness; he appreciates, down to the last feather-weight, the load our bent shoulders are carrying. He feels for us more keenly than our nearest friends can feel, for he sees more clearly the hard road that we

have to travel. He sees all, he knows all — our broken anguish, our heartless failure, our lonely struggles. When we fail, not blame but pity fills his heart, just as we should feel not blame but deep pity for a child whom we see trying so nobly, yet failing with such embarrassment.

Saint Anthony is our friend in all the royal magnificence of loyalty which that word implies. Others have disappointed us. We have been used, misused, deceived a hundred times by men and women, till our hearts tend to harden against all; for we have sought help from those who had none to give. We need a friend, and never so much as when friends seem illusionary, poetic, non-existent creatures. Then we need one for our own sake. We need one who has not spurned the beggar, the sinner, the bankrupt; who listens lovingly to the lisp of a child; one to whom the world has brought its secret sorrow for seven hundred years, brought it and left it behind.

Such a one is Saint Anthony and sorely do we need him, in youth, in manhood, in age. He holds divine Wisdom and divine Mercy in his arms, and at his feet lies an ocean of human sorrow — an ocean that is fed from a thousand turbid sources — the



hidden sorrows of human hearts. Across the dark waters a beam of help and hope flashes as he holds the Christ-Child on high. We need Saint Anthony, and to him we must go, for he is that unique creation of God — a friend who brings God nearer to us and brings us nearer to our fellow-men.

Before his statue we have seen a mother kneel in anguish and plead for the things which only a mother's heart could know; kneel and implore help in those things which only a mother's soul can fear. Before his statue we have seen the gray-haired merchant bend in quiet agony and ask that at least his good name and his business honor be left him from the wreck of his life's work. Before his statue we have seen a young man and woman kneel in the flower-perfumed darkness of a June night and pray for strength for each other.

Back through the centuries, through the years and years that fled ere our brief life began, Saint Anthony has been looking down on the world's poor and suffering, on the upturned faces that are prematurely old, on the humbled heads that are gray before their time — old and gray, not from sin, and not from years, but from the blighting touch of great sorrow, great disappointment. Through



the flight of years, while the fortunes and boundaries of nations changed, while names appeared for a moment above the sea of history, then fell back into its swinging waters and eternal oblivion, Saint Anthony has pressed the Divine Infant closer to his heart, and has stretched out his right hand to bless, to comfort, to help the prostrate millions at his feet. Through the divine institution we call the communion of saints, the crushed and beaten of the world go to this young saint for that hearing which their fellows have denied them. Saint Anthony speaks to the Infant in his arms in a prayer that has no words; and the casements of heaven open, and light and strength and eager love come earthward to heal the broken hearts of men.

In this group which we may see daily in our churches, Saint Anthony with the Christ-Child in his arms and a suppliant at his feet, we have that trinity of power, pity and need, that interflowing of supplication, of sorrow and balm, of love and gratitude, which turn man's face to heaven and fashion him after the image of God's own Son in His agony and God's own saints in their martyrdom.

Our heavenly Father ordained that we

should be helped in our major trials; that we should go to Him through our intercessors. It is as useless as it is tiresome for man to invent other courses — to tell men and women to become modern, free, and to look for their source of independent strength within themselves. There is nothing modern in a mistake. It is enormously flattering, and tragically unfair to man, to tell him that he has the powers of God within his subliminal self. It is loss of time to repeat a formula that is intrinsically inadequate to bring man to the receding and enclouded portals of happiness. I may say to myself from the cradle to the grave, "I will be strong. I will be successful. I will be confident. I will be independent and self-sufficient. I am the godly carver of my own destiny." I may say these things over and over, with the maddening repetition of an over-bending weed dipping in a stream; and the actual result on my life will be about as efficacious toward its shaping as are the light strokes of the weed on the waters in turning the course of the river. It will be with my formula as it generally is with the weed: some day the stream of events in my life will become a torrent, and tear my set phrases from their thin roots. God is not to be banished from

His world by any subjective nonsense of man. He has stood the test of the ages as man's Father, and our greater wisdom is in going to Him through His saints.

It has been so with others, it is not different with us. For though we are of a sophisticated age, we are not the first creation of the Almighty. It is not our work to find substitutes for God and religion and spiritual intercession and heavenly help. We, of our age, have taken it upon ourselves to legislate, but that does not alter the fact that to throw religion and the comforts of intercessory prayer overboard is to jettison our last supply of fresh water and turn our swollen lips to the briny tide; to spill our very lives from the water-bottles and drink from the salty madness of the sea.

In the very pains and heartbreaks that crush us most, our fellow-man is unable to help us, for he, like ourselves, is feeling the same anguish. Though it causes us a pang when we discover this, yet its revelation marks a great advance for our souls. Only when there is no creature on the horizon of our sorrow to whom we can appeal, do we go to our heavenly Father Who awaits us. Then we run to Him as children who have lost their way in a wood; or as gaunt

tattered men who have been tossed for days on an uncharted sea. Man turns to God only when by an act of his soul he sees no one but God, just as the needle finds the pole only when it is insulated from local attractions.

So it is the influence, or power, or creature, or saint which brings us most directly to God that will receive our fullest measure of gratitude. Herein, precisely, lies the mystery of the deep love and devotion for Saint Anthony among men, for no other saint in the calendar so consistently and eternally offers God to man — and God in His most loving and lovable form. He realizes that when man prays the only answer is God Himself; in the very form in which He came on earth to answer men's prayers.

## Saint Anthony and Labor

**W**E MIGHT consider the relationship between the Church and labor at any one of a score of different points of contact, from the Church's position on general strikes to her stand for fair wages and good living conditions; or at as many different times in history, from her first attitude toward slavery to Pope Leo XIII's encyclical on labor. We might also select great spokesmen and thinkers, from Saint Thomas More, who wrote about Utopia, to modern Popes writing about unemployment. But these in themselves would leave us cold. It might be clear according to the measure of our ability; but it would be unrelated to our lives in practice. It might be methodical, statistical, exhaustive; it might be fair and balanced; but who can weigh on any scale the inner emotions of man? Who can put in steady formula the tired workman's prayer at nightfall; the mother's distracted cry that

rings on the midnight air asking for bread for her children? Is there any instrument known to the science of economics whose blade or forceps can cut or pull from the aching soul the dull pain of failure?

Great have been the strides of progress in the handling of labor, and Church and State have contributed mightily. But can cold legislation take care of everything, fill every void in man's heart? Do not millions have yearnings, dreams, hopes, that can never be fulfilled on this side of the grave? Do not their eyes crave for color and their ears listen for music? Do they not seek for heroes, and ask to be told the stories of heroes? They will be satisfied to mix in the society of great minds, of kind hearts, of sympathetic souls. But are the doors, even of this society, always open to them?

In this article we shall attempt to state in warmer light just what the Church, in long ages past, did to fill this want in the lives of the poor. And, to paint our picture rightly, we have selected a deep and rich background, and we shall try to put in the middle front of our picture one of the most colorful and vibrant characters that our records know. We shall try to set Saint Anthony of Padua against the background of

the middle ages. And in doing so, we hope to place in clear perspective something that the Church did for the soul and body of man. Nor shall we stop at that one picture, for that would be to stop at the very beginning. But we shall follow on down through the centuries and see what influence Saint Anthony has had toward the easing and uplifting of man's mind. And we shall try to make it understood that Saint Anthony, that magnetic, helpful figure, is himself only the beautiful, balanced crystallization of our Church's sympathetic assistance, of her understanding of the human heart. We owe much to Saint Anthony of Padua, but the main point of this article is this, that we owe Saint Anthony of Padua himself, to our Church.

Sitting in a subway train or in any other public vehicle in any large city in the world, around the evening rush hour, it is not hard to think, to draw comparisons, to wonder. The faces around us that were set all day in a commercial pleasantness, have dropped the mask that business made them wear, and have relaxed into tired, almost helpless vacancy. The weary eyes scan the monotonous headlines; the shoulders sag beneath the weight of care. There is no talk, no communication of thought. Perhaps there are

few thoughts. Perhaps the tired brain is occupied in listless manner merely with the petty things which the eye takes in. Gazing on the crowd, it is not hard to think, nor is it hard to wonder: where are these tired millions going? To humdrum suburbs, to narrow apartments? Where tonight, and from what source, will they receive that measure of beauty and entertainment which every soul demands? Whence will come tonight the laugh, the cheerful look, the warm handclasp, the beam of welcome, that will banish those lines of weariness? *Will* there be a laugh or a handclasp or a welcome? Or are these people actually so dreadfully alone as they seem? Nor is it difficult to compare, namely — these people with the people of long ago; these men and women with the hearty men and women of the hills and the valleys of Europe; these grave faces with the faces that sparkled, in the rosy flame of a million firesides, while the story-teller of the evening held all breathless with his tales of wonder, of the battle and the chase; these tired bodies with the lithe, supple frames that bent in dance and fete in village hall, by the crossroads, in other ages and other lands. Nor is it difficult to think: to think of the awful truth of the words that



our Saviour spoke when He said, "Not on bread alone doth man live."

And can we think back to an ancient day, long before this stampede of progress started, and see man and woman in a different setting? Can we think of an agency even in that remote time, that was far-flung enough to reach all lives, wise enough to teach all hearts, kind enough to reach out a helping hand to all ills? Can we think of an economic condition which depended on this institution to give to the millions that unknown quantity, that extra something, which added to bread, makes life not only possible but pleasant? Is it hard for us to think of a time when the State looked to the Church to add that intangible supplement which came at the end of the day's toil, sanctified the day's hard grind, and promised a great future, a heaven of security from all loneliness and sorrow and toil?

We can think of this agency, this institution, easily, for we can think of the Catholic Church. Think of her through the ages, and see what she did to make man's life happier and brighter when his day's work was done, when the week's sum of labor was totaled. We can think of the parish church that was a social center. We can think of

the Guild halls that were commercial centers. We can think of the cathedrals, and of all the arts that expended their powers in decorating and filling with color and harmony those great structures raised by man to the glory of God. We can think of the churches in the valley, in the city, on the tiny island, by the margin of the lake, to which man and woman came as the shadows fell, to fill their beings with a spiritual beauty that was as essential to their souls' joy and peace as bread was to their bodies. We can think of an institution that sanctified labor and looked on the working man as a creature having dignity and individuality; as having a soul that was timed to swing in harmony with all the beauty of the earth and the heavens. We can think of the Catholic Church, whose founder was a Carpenter, whose first Pope was a Fisherman; whose holiness could mold such men as Saint Francis, the Seraphic Beggarman, and Saint Anthony, the Wonder-Worker.

We can think of these marvelous ages when the Church was in her full strength: when cathedral and spire pierced the gray skies and led man's eyes to heaven. We can think of churches whose windows caught the full light of day and changed it into

ruby wine that man might drink and be refreshed by the beauty of the house of God. For we can think of men and women who, by day, were mere workers but who, by evening, were beings of another and more beautiful world; beings who moved amid the ivory light of tapers, amid incense and deep red shadows.

Yet so far we have seen only the outer shell, the wall, the spire. Let us enter a church in the middle ages, or in the later centuries, and let us steep our souls for a moment in the genius that the Catholic Church took and dedicated to God. The centuries gave Palestrina, Orlandi di Lasso, Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, Liszt, who woke from chords the very soul of music herself and sent them pulsing through the world for all time. We can look to the ceiling and the walls, if our eye wants beauty, and behold Michelangelo at his labors, or Giotto, or Raphael, or Murillo — or a hundred other masters whose work will still be the work of foremost masters as long as time and culture stand.

For in those days men turned to the Church for comfort, as children turn to their mothers, and the Church drew from the treasures of her genius the arts that

feed the human soul. The Church was the educator and enlightener of the working man of the world. The Church, through the centuries of her greatness, drew musician and painter, drew sinner and saint, drew king and pauper, all within her fold, and brought down the blessings of peace, of resignation, of contentment on their heads.

Thus did the Church work; but where does Saint Anthony enter? He enters here.

The Catholic Church always made the poor and the needy her special consideration. She ever raised men and enlightened them to perform her works of mercy toward the poor. And Saint Anthony for seven hundred years, has made the poor of Christ his special clients. If the Church is universal, Saint Anthony, according to one of her greatest Popes, is her Saint of the Whole World. Saint Anthony is many things, and he is many things in a great measure. He, first and foremost, was a great Catholic. He was a saint who took the teaching and the counsels of Christ literally, for he threw aside riches to serve the poor. He wore out his own body by day and by night in teaching them from the pulpit, in visiting the sick, in consoling them with his kindness, in absolving the sinner from his sins; but he was, in

its best sense, that marvelous being which the Church alone can produce — he was that creature called a priest, God's own ordained leader of His people.

Such things he did during his life; and these he has done since his death; he has brought comfort to millions of aching hearts; he has cured disease; he has banished evil of every kind. For Saint Anthony, in his relation to the poor and the needy — and to the rich who are sometimes more needy — is not a mere man, but an institution set up by God to help mankind.

Men and nations, however, are not always quick to recognize their true benefactors; but if they are not quick, they are generally sure, at least finally, to give a man the measure of credit that is his due. The common sense and general gratitude of mankind take care of this, eventually. Therefore, when the expression of gratitude is deep, spontaneous, the person honored has, from the first, been outstanding in help toward his fellow-mortals. If from the first men and women have had their prayers answered and their needs fulfilled, they will, from the first, begin to show their appreciation.

The application of this fact to Saint Anthony is so evident that it does not need to

be stated. Even while alive, he was known as The Saint, and loudly proclaimed as such. The lisping voices of little children, as well as the voices of the aged, canonized him while he stood in their midst. And the hardened hands of labor, through the years, have brought their mite to build shrines to the greatness of his name, to build monuments as witnesses of his unfailing readiness to take the weight off stooped shoulders, to remove the sharp stones from the path that the poor must always walk. And today, seven centuries after his death, Saint Anthony still stands upright among his petitioners, the Christ-Child in his arms, in practically every Catholic church in the world.

Our Lord once said, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all things to Myself." Now priests and leaders lift up Christ's virtues, and thus bring men to love and serve Him in their own hearts. The result has been as Christ predicted: He has drawn men and women to Himself by natural and supernatural means, by the beauty of His house, by the sweetness of His presence, by the holiness of His priesthood, by the sympathy of His teaching, by the greatness of the reward He offers. And He has drawn most quickly the hearts that He loves the most —

namely, the hearts that were broken, bleeding, crushed, desolate. He has drawn them by His saints, whom in all ages His Church has fashioned.

And, standing in the forefront of this white army is Saint Anthony of Padua. For Saint Anthony has also taken Christ most literally; he has lifted Him high that all might see; he has lifted Him in bodily form, and has held Him aloft that the unread might behold and come closer. For many centuries now, rich and poor have caught the meaning of this invitation to look up to Christ and find consolation. They have looked up and have found Him in the arms of Saint Anthony; and they have received from Him that grace and help, that peace of heart and contentment of mind which are needed to make life bearable as it is ground out daily by the tireless wheels of industry, that all must serve.

## Saint Anthony and Peace

**S**ILENCE is probably the most flouted of the ancient virtues today. Seneca complained that conversation rendered him less a man. Yet nowadays we do not merely converse, we shout; and this for the simple reason that we must shout if we hope to be heard. Noise, loud and persistent, is in the ascendancy; and all the fanfare of our circus methods of attracting attention to commerce, social life, athletics, the arts, and even to religion, is braying discordantly in our ears.

Yet what beautiful thing was ever born of noise? Who has heard the petals of the rose-bud open, or caught the swish of the lily as she donned her white veil behind the grille of nature's cloister? What ear has heard the sun rise, or noted the course of the sap in the trees? Who listened close by the crevices of Shakespeare's brain to the first stirrings within of those conceptions



never surpassed in subtlety of grasp or beauty of form? Even the most ravishing of the masters' harmonies ran in silent, entrancing melody through the souls of their authors before they gained an articulation that never compared in rounded beauty with the perfection of the inspiration.

Silence is a mark of divinity; and human beings, in that measure in which they have observed it, have risen to or fallen from the standard set by heaven. Nor do we mean an absolute or a stupid silence, but a silence born of wisdom and nourished on rich thoughts; for we must remember that God Himself spake, uttering the Word: and the Word was peace.

Christ Himself, the Author of the supreme and ultimate peace which the world cannot give, was born in a reign of peace; was born at an hour of the twenty-four when the normal peace of the period was intensified by the calm of the heavens and the silence of the night. He chose for His Mother a Maiden whose soul never knew one instant's disquiet. He elected to be born in a quiet cave rather than amidst the bustle of Jerusalem; with undisturbed cattle around Him rather than chattering men and women. And as His angels swung down from the

battlements of heaven, their first word to stir the atmosphere of earth was a chanted message of peace to all mankind.

We might continue in the contemplation of this beautiful theme; but we must remind ourselves that our message, though caught from heaven on earth's first Christmas night, must be re-steeped for us in the life of a man born in the twelfth century.

Our consideration of peace is not untimely; for this theme, sung as it has been by a hundred generations of men, is being recited with fresh vigor on countless platforms and in the inner cabinets of our governments. Men are clamoring for peace as never perhaps before; and not only for peace that is the opposite of open war, but for peace of mind, peace of soul, peace that will descend on them and their families and bring some of that quiet joy, that calm contentment which struggle and warfare so loudly promised and so bitterly proved unable to yield.

It is to this very personal peace that Saint Anthony's whole life points and draws us. And let us not be deceived into thinking that this calm, individual peace is a watered-down substitute for universal peace. That misconception will start us out at wrong beginnings,

short-circuit us back into the darkness where we now stand. For personal peace of mind, contentment amid the affairs of life, confidence in ourselves and in those around us, are not a reflection of a world-peace. Individual peace — let me light these words on the page — is not a thin fraction of a great, beaming parent ray of happiness coming down to us from an undiscovered point in space. Universal peace is an accumulation, a river that has grown broad and majestic, but fed by numberless streams; the growth of world-peace is from within, and moves from the bottom upward. It is a massed result, produced by individual work.

And if all this be so, one conclusion is manifest; every person on earth who has the use of reason, can start at any moment and work for and toward world-peace. And the excuse for re-stating such an obvious truth lies in the vital significance of its being clearly caught and understood, not as a well-defined image in the mirror of our intelligence, but as a moral vitamin that we must absorb into our working code for the construction of a happier existence. If there be a crying need for peace in each of us individually, and therefore in the total of us all, a method for attaining to it must

be welcome. And with a want so essential, our effort to appease it ought to be sincere.

The life of any saint, if intelligently studied and faithfully imitated, could bring about a world-peace by itself. For when the fires of rhetoric are ashes, when our stacks of economic plans are growing moss, when statesmen have passed into oblivion, one fact will stand out eternally and luminously clear for all to see who do not close their eyes to its existence: the saints had the one, true and only wisdom; they alone successfully answered the pressing question, How shall we establish a lasting peace? And they did it through the application of an eternal formula repeating itself once in each individual life: be at peace with God; be at peace with yourself; then only will you be at peace with your fellow-man. For we shall never fight with any man for part of his riches if our whole ambition in life be to give that man part of our treasure. We shall never contend with our neighbors to possess the things of the earth, if our whole attention be fixed on obtaining heaven for ourselves and helping others to the same end.

All this may be argued as being too ideal, too altruistic. But the evident answer is that the very peace for which men are

craving is highly ideal, and is based on altruism. War is the opposite of peace but no battle in history has ever been fought to give somebody something for nothing. And in working for an ideal thing we are merely following a well-worn principle when we use ideal methods. Men have always reached their objective by using the tools fitted to help them to that end. Just so, if we say that we are working for peace, we must either use the proper methods, or else be sincere enough to admit that we are not in earnest. We cannot sit idly by and wait for a cloak of world-peace to fall on us; the effort must come from our individual hearts.

But while any saint's life could teach us the wisdom that leads to peace, Saint Anthony, in a particular way, is able to instruct us. In fact, if we have not mentioned him specifically so far it is because his figure has been in the background throughout, his spirit identified with the method of reaching world-peace that we have tried to set down. He was born into a period when the world was in a tangle of wars. The various motives for conflict were even then old — greed, pride, religion. Christian fought Moham-medan, Guelph charged Ghibelline. The crowns of Europe were in circulation. He

was born into a royal court, of a long line of warriors. Armor was his inheritance.

Yet even then men were hoping vaguely for peace, and were going lustily to war for its accomplishment. However, by a route so plain that most men have not even yet noticed it, Saint Anthony set out in the conquest of peace. He set out to help toward world-peace by leading a peaceful life. Correctly, he first set out to win it for himself, to win it by declaring the only war that is at all times justified — war on himself.

He made the conquest. He laid aside his noble inheritance to the governorship of Lisbon, and put on the garb of a religious. He laid aside personal ambition and sought martyrdom in Africa. He even hid himself in a cave. And it was in this seclusion that he finally ran the enemy of self to earth, and slew all self-love forever. Then, white and wan, but conqueror in the greatest battle man can know, he emerged from his retirement, and with the strength of a lion went up and down Italy and France preaching peace to men — the peace of a good conscience that comes from honesty in business, from obedience to established government, from contentment with one's lot in life.

Men hearkened to this young Friar. Men

of blood and iron come to his confessional for absolution, and returned to peaceful lives. Heretics listened to his eloquence and knew again the peace of reconciliation with their God.

All of which would make of Saint Anthony a beautiful creature set off on a throne of clouds, did he not attain to this glorious height by the very methods within the grasp of every child of Adam. His achievements would be dead history, did he not teach us clearly by his beautiful, virtuous life this one supreme, vital, persistent truth — that by overcoming selfishness, by looking outward instead of inward, by giving and not grasping, by silence and not by stir, by praying rather than by contending, is won that peace with self and peace with God which is the basis of all world-peace. In silence he heard the whisper to throw aside the governorship of a city and win complete government of self. In silence he learned the deep meaning of the principle of mutual agreement, understanding and help that lies within the rule of Christ to forgive all debts even as we hope and expect ours to be forgiven. And it was in the utter silence of a mountain-top in a cloud-filled cave that he heard the command to come down from his lonely



hermitage, mix with men and speak to them of that peace which is close to every human heart; mix with the war-worn soldier who dreams of peace in his fitful sleep on the battlefield; mix with statesmen who plot wars only to open, as they hope, the way to greater peace.

Just as Saint Anthony conquered self, so he won over the enemies of France and Italy. The high and the low looked to him to forward their cause. He worked untiringly, first for personal, and secondly for universal peace. Nor did his mission end with his death in Padua. It lives today, and is as gentle as it is persuasive; it still points the pathway to peace, the pathway that is the same for individuals as for nations: the pathway of personal holiness, of sincere and untiring service to God and man. It points upward to a peace that is eternal, that shines brilliantly in a glorious beam from the very center of heaven; to a peace that is born continuously there of silence, of contemplation, of holiness.

That heavenly ray shines on all; men have but to bare their hearts to have it strike to life and germinate within their souls an individual peace that will bring a bright effulgence to the race, and reach and touch to



greater glory the beauties of heaven itself — a world-peace that will be the sum of all our efforts, a world-happiness that will be a reality instead of a vague dream. That primal peace descended from heaven as Christ's first gift to man. It is ours to claim: a peace arising from mutual fairness between men and nations, a peace that will bless young years and bring contentment to death-beds — a peace that hovers over the earth, waiting to be born again in the hearts of men of good-will.

## Saint Anthony in Wonderland

**T**HE shy bachelor who wrote "Alice in Wonderland" produced the great fairy tale of the world; because somehow he analyzed man in a new way, by personifying his defects in animals and flowers. So artfully did the author do this that even those who offend by sarcastic remarks or destructive criticism, can read their own analysis from the story without resentment. Yet softly as he drew the angular faults, the cloud of pain seems to deepen around this exquisite book of lovable nonsense, as we acquire wisdom through the years.

Perhaps, as we grow older we become more sensitive, or perchance our own errors and sins begin to speak to us through the lips of the hare and the hatter, from the petals of the rose and the lily, and the deafening, chattering daisies. However, I am reviewing "Alice in Wonderland" here only in so far as the fable opens a way to vision ourselves;

in so far as we let the creatures around us become our conscience for a while.

I might treat this subject by considering the worst sin against God, that of idolatry, of not recognizing Him, of setting at naught and scoffing at His goodness, His wisdom, His love. Examination might be made of the worst sin against man, that of negligent and cruel coldness; of not seeing, hearing or loving him. I might draw an interesting picture of this cruel side of life, and use for pencils the painful darts that man has directed against man. But it would be a dark picture at best, and the world has sufficient of them. I prefer to sketch life's fairer things; to walk through the flowers, among God's creatures, in the morning of life; to read "Alice in Wonderland" as a child once again; to see the happy wondrous impossible things; to marvel at the tiger-lily talking, rather than grow critical and cold as to what it says.

We shall not take Alice for our guide. She was patient and sympathetic; but Alice was a myth. She was refreshing and as transparently innocent as the dew of heaven; but she never actually existed. Our model, our guide for behavior toward all things, is a fair young saint who walked for a short

while in wonder, upon an earth which to him was as delightful as "Looking-Glass Room" was to Alice; an earth on which all things may be written backward, as they were for her. Sorrow, hunger, pain and loneliness are written backward when held up to the mirror of God's love, there to be read aright.

Our earth was to Saint Anthony a wonderland, and having once solved for himself the problem of a reversely written world, he undertook to help others see the beautiful mystery. His has been a fruitful task, in the happiness he has wrought! Surely, finding the answer to a question is worth the perplexing agony of fathoming the mystery. The joy of working out the solution is worth the sleepless hours spent pondering the problem. To know at last that sorrow is joy written backward, that loss is gain reversed, that grief is happiness turned about, makes it worth while seeking the guide and teacher in this "Looking-Glass Room" of ours.

I often wonder who found out that Saint Anthony knew all these things. I wonder what first prompted going directly to this boy with the deep, dark eyes, to seek the answer to some despaired-of riddle. At any rate, whoever the seeker was, he made a

marvelous discovery, and one which has stood the test of years, and many nervous and hurried appeals. The world has long been going to this young saint for the sympathy, help, love and understanding which it so earnestly craves and cannot find by itself.

The earth teaches many glorious lessons in her order and beauty; we can read the greatness of God in the geometry of the mountains and in the pendulum of the tides; the wisdom of God in the clock of the universe that has struck so many punctual hours; the love of God in that tree in Paradise from which Adam's hand plucked the forbidden fruit, and to which, legend says, the hand of the Son of God was later nailed. We vision the beauty of God in the crystalline depths of summer space and the colored tapestries of the clouds; in the perfume of the flowers and the notes of bird and insect. Man can prepare himself for heaven by learning the beauties of earth. Yet nature's glory merely intensifies moods; it takes a higher influence to change them. Were it otherwise, nature would be God instead of God's servant. A stroll through the woods would bring absolution, and the song of the river, benediction.

Earth also holds many sorrows, that tell

of far greater beauties of our Father in heaven and lead us more directly to His arms. Entrancing as are the sunsets that bronze the forest tops, they do not answer the question as to why the babe lies lifeless in its mother's arms, or why both are waxen figures in each other's eternal embrace. Soft as are the deep, pulsing sounds of a summer night, they fail to explain why a young man somewhere was caught in grinding wheels, and left armless through the long years to come. Moor and meadow are broad and peaceful, but they do not tell heart-broken parents why a child has returned love and sacrifice with a coldness and disobedience that have darkened the remaining years of their lives. When a man is overcome with pain he seeks a divine guide to a Divine Helper. When a man is in sin, he needs Divine Forgiveness. Our guide will lead us to both.

Saint Anthony shows us the beauty that lies in sorrow and loss rather than the actions of man that have brought them about. He leads us to God as our Father and Helper rather than our Judge, for God knows our plight best; He knows that though we have sinned, we want to receive forgiveness as His children. Through our suffering we

are better prepared to learn the lesson He wishes to teach us — the lesson that cost His Son so much to give and which drives His saints to the wilderness, to hunger and long vigils. This lesson is, to accept in a meek spirit the things God sends us — which sounds like a pious platitude, but carries the answer to life's unrest. He wants us to grasp the fact that sorrow has a deeper worth than joy; to know when we are misunderstood, when the cut of a friend goes deepest, that we are thereby drawn closer to the Heart of Christ, which was opened by a man whom He had a moment before, redeemed with red agony. God wants us to know that when children are actually hungry and shivering with cold, the love of a heavenly Father's heart beats warmer for them, and the angels look upon them with reverence; for children in want and pain are like unto Mary's Son, Who is the Son of God.

Millions have lived and died, fighting against these paradoxes till the last breath. We need a teacher before we can learn things that are virtually above our understanding. When man ate of the tree of knowledge, he lost much of his insight through the very act which he thought would add to his wisdom. We need one

to teach us who has returned in an extraordinary manner to God's friendship.

What is called the wisdom of the saints is, in reality, to grasp clearly that sorrow is joy; that pain and hunger are blessings. That is why we need Saint Anthony — and more especially Saint Anthony in Wonderland, for upon earth all things read backward. Christ Himself told us so, but we easily forget. The Sermon on the Mount held our maxim up to the mirror of true understanding, for Christ said the poor were rich, the meek were rulers, the mourners and persecuted were blessed. Saint Anthony will lead us safely through this strange land, and will help us to understand its contradictory paths. Friends will hurt us, but he will tell us how we may gain eternal glory thereby; losses will come, but he will turn us away from them, and we shall find we are walking toward gain. The very flowers and animals will criticize our best and most sincere actions, but he will tell us, as the flowers told Alice, to reach down and feel how hard is the very ground upon which they grow, and we shall pity rather than blame things rooted in such a soil.

Where others found perishable beauties our Saint in Wonderland beheld the har-



mony of nature and faith. In all life he saw only one discordant note and that was sin; and in spite of this, he never despaired of the sinner, because of the superabundant mercy of God. He sanctified natural inclinations and directed them to a supernatural end. He saw all created things as reflections of God, united in a concert of praise and he called upon every spirit to glorify the Lord. Through the zeal of Padua's Saint wrongs were righted, virtue was revived and churches and public squares resounded with thanksgiving to God.

In such manner will Saint Anthony lead us to the beautiful mountains, lead us toward them by apparently turning us away from them. He will lead us to true riches by teaching us to forego earthly pleasures; to true peace by forgetting worldly gain; to true joy by shutting our eyes to vain and harmful things. This young saint who, long ago, in a monastery garden, learned life's beautiful story in words written backward, will guide us through the flowers and along the paths to our home on the majestic and wondrous hill that stands on the far edge of God's Wonderland. Upon our journey he will teach us that the heart of our Divine Saviour is the source of eternal life, for centuries ago he

said to men, "If we seek gold, pure and unalloyed, we must approach the interior altar, the very Heart of Jesus, and there study the untold riches of His love." The mysteries of grace which the Wonder-Worker received from the Sacred Infant, inflamed his own heart with a divine fire, which burns with an all-consuming love for men; a love which he imparts to souls who go to him with faith and confidence. Wonders untold has he wrought for those who have sought his aid. Beauties undreamed of has he revealed to those who have asked his guidance.

In Wonderland we eventually learn from our saintly knight that separation from God is the greatest cause of human misery and that union with Him renders every sacrifice sweet. Those who continue to journey with him finally discover that chivalrous things of which we dare to dream we may also dare to do.

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*Imprimi Potest:* Jerome Dawson, O. F. M.

Minister Provincialis

*Nihil Obstat:* Arthur J. Scanlan, S. T. D.

Censor Librorum

*Imprimatur:* † Stephen J. Donahue, D. D.

Administrator, New York

February 3, 1939.

PRINTED  
U.S.A.



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